



# Fiber – Start to Rough It!



## What is Fiber?

Fiber is a carbohydrate made of plant material that is not absorbed by the body. There are two main types of fiber - **Soluble and Insoluble**.

- Soluble Fiber: Dissolves and thickens in water to form a gel. This type of fiber helps you feel full longer.
- Insoluble Fiber: Is called "roughage." This type of fiber tends to speed up the passage of material through the digestive tract.

## Benefits of Fiber

A diet high in fiber has been linked to lower risk for:

- Heart Disease
- High Cholesterol
- Digestive Disorders
- Certain Cancers
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes

If you have already developed one of the above diseases or conditions, a high fiber diet can help you manage the disorder.

Lastly, because soluble fiber helps you feel full longer, a diet high in soluble fiber helps with weight loss!

## Recommended Intake of Fiber

Current recommendations suggest adults eat 20-35 grams of dietary fiber per day.

The average American eats only 14-15 grams of dietary fiber per day.

Remember to also drink plenty of liquids! Recommendations include 6-8 glasses (8 oz. each) of water per day. Otherwise fiber can slow down or even block digestion.

## Sources of Fiber

<u>Soluble Fiber</u>	<u>Insoluble Fiber</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oatmeal</li><li>• Oat bran</li><li>• Nuts and Seeds</li><li>• Legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils)</li><li>• Apples</li><li>• Pears</li><li>• Strawberries</li><li>• Blueberries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whole grains (whole wheat breads, barley, couscous, brown rice, bulgur)</li><li>• Whole grain breakfast cereals</li><li>• Wheat bran</li><li>• Seeds</li><li>• Carrots</li><li>• Cucumbers</li><li>• Zucchini</li><li>• Celery</li><li>• Tomatoes</li></ul>

(\*This is only a partial listing)

## Tips to Increase Fiber

- Eat whole fruits instead of drinking fruit juices.
- Eat fresh or dried fruit for snacks or desserts, such as berries, oranges, prunes or apricots.
- Replace white rice, bread and pasta with brown rice and whole-grain products. Choose whole-grain cereals for breakfast.
- Eat fruits and vegetables including their peels such as pears, apples, peaches, cooked potatoes and squash.
- Add legumes (beans, dried peas or lentils) to chili, soups, pasta salads or casseroles. Canned beans are easy to add to your favorite recipes!



## Introducing Beans to Your Diet

When eating beans keep the meal light. Eating too many beans or beans mixed with a lot of fat may cause gas.

Some beans are less gas producing than others.

- Adzuki beans are considered the most digestible.
- Other beans such as mung, split peas, and lentils are also easy on your digestion system.

Beans are a great source of fiber. If you are not used to high fiber foods, beans may cause gas. Most people find that eating fiber takes some getting used to. After a bit of time, your body will adjust to your high fiber diet.

## How to Prepare and Cook Dried Beans

Before you start cooking dried beans, remove them from their package and look them over carefully. Eliminate any small rocks or dirt pieces and rinse the remaining beans with cold water.

- Traditional- Put the beans in a large pot and add enough water to cover them (for 2 pounds of beans you will need at least 6 cups of water). Let the beans soak overnight at room temperature.\*
- Quick Soak- Bring 6 cups of water to boil. Add one pound (or two cups) of dried beans. Boil for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and let stand for one hour.\*
- Hot Soak- Bring 10 cups of water to a boil and add 2 cups of beans. Boil for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 4 to 6 hours. (Those who use this method claim to reduce gas associated with eating beans.)\*
- Refrigerator Soak- For each cup of beans add 3 cups of water, cover and refrigerate from 1-15 days.\*

Although more expensive, canned beans are always an alternative to using dried beans. Canned beans are much less time-consuming to prepare.

\* Always discard water the beans were soaked in. Cook in fresh water or broth.